

Montana Lobbying Requirements

Lobbying: “The practice of promoting or opposing the introduction or enactment of legislation before the legislature or the members of the legislature. . .” (For more information, see Frequently Asked Questions below.)

Lobbyist: A person who engages in the practice of lobbying. A lobbyist does not include an individual acting solely on the individual’s own behalf. . . or an individual who received payments from one or more persons that total less than the amount specified under 5-7-112, MCA in a calendar year. (2007: \$2,300; adjusted thereafter for inflation.)

Principal: A person who employs a lobbyist.

Registration: Any adult of good moral character who is otherwise qualified may be licensed as a lobbyist. We provide a license application form. Registration is complete upon receipt of the application, a license fee of \$150, and an authorization from a principal. Each license expires on December 31 of each even-numbered year unless it is terminated at an earlier date upon the request of the lobbyist.

Reports: A principal must file periodic reports of payments made for the purpose of lobbying. These reports must include:

- payments made to individual lobbyists;
- payments made to individuals (other than registered lobbyists) employed or retained to lobby;
- payments made for travel expenses, advertising, entertainment, communication, postage, printing, and other office expenses;
- each bill draft request, bill number, and legislative issue for which a major effort was exerted to support, oppose, or modify the introduction or enactment of legislation, and stating the principal’s position;
- each earmarked contribution and membership fee of \$250 or more, aggregated over the period January 1 through December 31, paid to the principal for the purpose of promoting, opposing, or modifying the introduction or enactment of legislation, providing full names of each payer, amount, and issue area;
- name of payee and beneficiary of: each separate payment of \$25 or more paid to the benefit of any public official and each separate payment of \$100 or more paid to the benefit of more than one public official.

(Statutory Authority: Title 5, Chapter 7, Lobbying, §5-7-101 et seq. Montana Code Annotated.)

Question: How do I know if I’m required to register as a lobbyist?

Not everyone who lobbies is required to register under Montana law. The term lobbyist does not include:

- an individual acting solely on the individual’s own behalf,
- an individual who is not paid, or
- someone who is paid a total less than the amount specified under 5-7-112, MCA in a calendar year. (2009: \$2,400.)

Question: How do I use the online registration service?

Go to <http://politicalpractices.mt.gov>. If you have questions about the service, read through the online instructions or click on 'Try the Demo'.

Question: How do I contact you if I'm still having trouble, or have questions?

Call our office at 406-444-2942. Or send an email to CPPGeneralMailbox@mt.gov.

Question: I'll be hiring one or more lobbyists. Do I fill out the L-2 or the L-3?

If you intend to pay an individual more than the threshold amount in any given calendar year (currently \$2400), file Form L-2. If you plan to spend more than the threshold amount, but don't intend to pay *any individual lobbyist* more than the threshold amount, you'll file Form L-3.

Question: How do I find a lobbying reporting calendar?

The reporting calendar is available on our web site: <http://politicalpractices.mt.gov>. Look under the dark green 'Lobbying' tab near the top of the page.

Question: How do I get a new user ID if mine is lost?

Call our office at 406-444-2942. Or send an email to CPPGeneralMailbox@mt.gov. We can provide you with a new user ID.

Question: I created a new user id and password – why can't I get into the service?

If you forget your user id or password and create a new user, you must call our office at 406-444-2942 to have the security reset and a new access id established.

Question: How do I update lobbyist or principal information?

You can use the online service to update information, including addresses, phone numbers, etc. Or send an email to CPPGeneralMailbox@mt.gov.

Question: How do I pay my lobbyist fee?

Once you've registered, this service will allow you to pay your fees with a credit card or eCheck online. If you prefer to use cash or a check, you can still register online. Once you've paid the fee (by bringing cash or a check to our office, for instance), you can be issued a lobbyist license.

Question: How do I avoid paying late fees? Weren't there a lot of fines after the last session?

The deadlines for filing financial reports cannot be extended or waived. We send reminders, so be sure you provide an e-mail address that's checked regularly. (Last year, fines totaled over \$22,000 for late filing.)

Question: How do I notify you when I've terminated the relationship with my lobbyist?

Call our office at 406-444-2942. Or send an email to CPPGeneralMailbox@mt.gov.

Question: How do I find the laws that govern lobbying and lobbyist financial reporting?

The lobbying laws are found in Title 5, chapter 7, MCA. A link to these laws and the associated rules is available on our web site: <http://politicalpractices.mt.gov>. Look under the dark green 'Lobbying' tab near the top of the page.